



LINCOLN
CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION
ADDRESSES

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ADDRESSES

*Delivered
At The
Celebration of*

THE ONE HUNDRED
AND EIGHTH
ANNIVERSARY

of the birth of

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
Lincoln Centennial Association

At The

Leland Hotel, in Springfield,
Illinois, on the *twelfth* day
of *February*, nineteen hundred
and seventeen.

SPRINGFIELD

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The Lincoln Centennial Association

Incorporated under the Laws of Illinois

OBJECT: *“To properly observe the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve to posterity the memory of his words and works, and to stimulate the patriotism of the youth of the land by appropriate annual exercises.”*

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The Spirit of Lincoln in the Present World Crisis

The Address Delivered by

Doctor John Grier Hibben

President of Princeton University



AMONG the earliest memories of my childhood is that of a household strangely disturbed and saddened. From excited and yet hushed voices, through expressions of horror and of grief, I heard the cruel story of the assassination of Lincoln. I have still in mind the confused but indelible picture of the family group of my old home gathered together upon its threshold in the early morning, as my grandfather and uncle left us to take

the train to Springfield, to attend the funeral of the martyred President. In the clearer memories of my later boyhood days, I distinctly recall how constantly and vividly Lincoln was held before my mind, as the great hero of American young manhood. I was reared in the Lincoln cult and in paying homage tonight to his memory, I am also discharging the debt of gratitude which I owe to those who taught me to love and revere his name.

The governing ideas of our life, those ideas which control conduct and mould character are not made intelligible to us through the forms of definition. As abstract conceptions they are vague and dim in our minds; they become real to us only as they are illustrated and become incarnate in some vital personality. The three great ideas of liberty, justice and mercy which are the foundation principles of

the law of life, find supreme illustration in the character of Abraham Lincoln. These ideas become clear to our thought and are a command to our will in so far as we are able with understanding sense to divine the nature of that spirit which animated his words and deeds. It is true as Lincoln himself expressed it in Baltimore, on April 18th, 1864, that "the world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people just now are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty, but in using the same word we do not all mean the same. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor, while with others, the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of the other men's labor."

Where definitions fail we seek a symbol to

express the thought which lies too deep for words. No symbol of liberty, however, satisfies our needs. The statue of liberty enlightening the world arouses deep feelings of sentiment, but does not suggest its significant meaning, nor indicate the mode in which the spirit of liberty may manifest itself in the world of human affairs. The name of Lincoln, however, the supreme lover of liberty, is for every American the perfect symbol of liberty itself, and his character, its true commentary.

No symbolic figure with veiled eyes, holding the balanced scales of justice can give any adequate expression to the real significance of that word. Here again we crave something more than a symbol. We turn rather to the open eyes and the penetrating vision of one who beneath the surface differences of race and color saw the fundamental equality in

human kind which is the basis of justice between man and man the world over. With Lincoln moreover liberty and justice were not unrelated terms; for it was the cardinal doctrine of his political creed that justice was the sole ground and guarantee of liberty. While Lincoln was always fundamentally just in thought and action and could be at times even sternly just, yet in his nature there was a conspicuous strain of the "mercy that seasons justice." After the One who, in human form upon our earth, always had compassion upon the multitude, Lincoln stands out in all history as the incomparable example of power disposed to mercy.

The idea of mercy became flesh in his noble personality in which was revealed throughout the cruel years of our civil war the great heart ever beating in tenderness and compassion for the strong and the weak, for friend and foe

alike. His characteristic acts of mercy were due to no weakness of character, but because he realized the infinite capacity of human nature for suffering.

Because these ideas which we most admire and to which we most ardently aspire find complete realization in him, Lincoln has come naturally to be regarded by us all as pre-eminently our national hero. Lincoln, however, is not merely the hero of every true American. His influence reaches beyond our shores and beyond his time as Stanton prophesized at his death—"He now belongs to the ages." He has become indeed the type, the symbol and the incarnation to other peoples the world over of that which they prize above even life itself. This is illustrated in the striking attitude towards Lincoln of France and Great Britain today. Yearning for some ideal to steady and inspire them, some great memory, some vision

of a spirit standing within the shadow of this terrible war, they find their longing realized in the noble nature and oracular words of Lincoln. As an editorial in the *Spectator* of December 23rd, 1916, puts it:

“The English speaking man whenever he is greatly moved to great issues turns instinctively to Lincoln. And Lincoln never fails him. There was not only the brave heart but the *mens aqua in arduis*—the mind which kept its equal balance though the poles crashed around him and the globe rocked in earthquake and eclipse.”

In a letter which I received from one who was in Great Britain during the first months of the war, it is stated that after the first shock of the war the most serious minded of the English

again and again gave expression to their thought in the words, "We need a Lincoln." "Times like these call for an Abraham Lincoln." "In this present situation what would Lincoln have done?" In Scotland during the first month of the war Dr. McGregor in St. Andrews Church in Edinburgh in three successive sermons quoted from Lincoln's Gettysburg address and his second Inaugural, and entreated his hearers "to practice in this day the patience, the charity, the gentle humanity of the great American who led his country through troublous times to victory."

In a review of Francis Fisher Browne's work on Abraham Lincoln in the *Spectator* July 18, 1914, Lincoln is referred to as "the greatest product of the Anglo Saxon race in the last century." Lincoln's career is characterized in this review also as "having the splendor of some great monument of nature."

In the public addresses at the great mass meetings in England and in Scotland, in sermons in the various churches, in war posters, in article after article, Lincoln was held up as the model for British statesmanship and as the great leader of the people. In the most recent biography of Lincoln just published by Lord Charnwood, we find these words in the preface—"It is a time when we may learn much from Lincoln's failures and success, from his patience, his modesty, his serene optimism and his eloquence, so simple and so magnificent."

Many writers have drawn attention to the interesting fact of Lincoln's remarkable popularity through all the years since his death with the British working classes, inasmuch as they recognize in him one who believed most thoroughly in the "possible dignity of common men and common things." It is a most significant fact that people of Great Britain in the

time of greatest national peril have turned instinctively to Lincoln for inspiration, and the reason of this, I take it, is because they find in him the embodiment of those principles which in their minds form the justification of all their endeavor. Not only do they look to him in a general way for inspiration, but they have repeatedly referred to his words in order to mould public opinion and to justify governmental action. It is to the words of Lincoln that they have turned in order to stimulate the spirit of volunteer service. His message also on the draft laws which was written for Congress, but never made public, has been quoted extensively in public print, in parliamentary and other speeches. The references to Lincoln on the subject of conscription are used not merely as the opinion of a witness in the case, but are stated confidently as being the conclusion of the whole matter. As one of the papers

in Great Britain has put it—"What was good enough for Lincoln is good enough for us." In an article in the *Spectator* of September 26th, 1914, on "President Lincoln and Compulsory Service," the writer says: "Lincoln's views on the subject of conscription are so clear, so just and so well thought out that they are worth remembering at the present crisis."

There perhaps has never been such eager expectancy throughout the world concerning the speech of any man as that which waited the utterances of Lloyd George in reply to Germany's peace overtures, and when he arose in Parliament to speak for the government and for the British people and indirectly for their allies, he centered the whole burden of his declaration in the quoted words of Lincoln—"We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is

attained. Under God I hope it will not end until that time."

What can be said of Great Britain can be said even more forcibly of France. The French people have always loved Lincoln and they claim him as one of their own heroes. His great personality has taken possession of the imagination of the French people and there is no French hero who is more highly revered among the common people of France than Abraham Lincoln. You will remember that at the time of Lincoln's death expressions of condolence and sympathy came to the United States from thirty-one French cities; and from a mass meeting of students in France came this message—"In President Lincoln we mourn a fellow citizen; for no country is now inaccessible, and we consider as ours that country where there are neither masters nor slaves, where every man is free or is fighting to become free.

“We are the fellow citizens of John Brown, of Abraham Lincoln, and of Mr. Seward. We young people, to whom the future belongs, must have the courage to found a true democracy, and we will have to look beyond the ocean to learn how a people who have made themselves free can preserve their freedom. * * *

“The President of the great republic is dead, but the republic shall itself live forever.”

At this same time a commemorative medal in gold was presented to Mrs. Lincoln by the people of France, and in order to allow the poorer classes to take part in this gift the maximum amount for each subscription was limited to two cents. When the medal was struck it was presented by Eugene Pelletan to Mr. Bigelow, our representative in France with these words—“Tell Mrs. Lincoln that in this little box is the heart of France.”

From that time to the present, Lincoln has

always represented to the minds of France the ideas of a free republic, of the integrity of the national life, the obligation of the individual to obey the call of the nation and the obligation of a nation to protect the helpless and the oppressed. Since the outbreak of the war the most significant reference to Lincoln and to his relation to France occurred upon the occasion of a mass meeting of the citizens of Paris held in the large amphitheatre of the Sorbonne on the 24th of November last to commemorate "the magnificent generosity of the citizens of the United States which has manifested itself in their splendid gift to alleviate the suffering of the wounded and helpless in France since the outbreak of the war." Emile Boutroux, the eminent philosopher and a member of the Academy who presided at this meeting quoted Lincoln's Gettysburg address in the course of his remarks and added: "And what remains

for us, the people of France to do in our day is to take up the great task which Lincoln described in this address at Gettysburg, a task for us unfortunately of far vaster proportions. Contrary to those who maintain that democracy is a form of government which can rest only upon the continuation of peace and which is incapable of defending itself against an organized enemy in the face of war, let us demonstrate upon the field of battle that one is able to believe in reason and in liberty without sacrificing on that account the sterner qualities which are necessary in the eternal struggle for existence; and that moral vigor does not exclude, but on the contrary ennobles and infinitely enhances military valor."

Are we to conclude from this appeal of the nations at war to Lincoln's words and Lincoln's spirit that he is the support solely of those who in the agony of a terrific death

struggle invoke his steadfast fidelity and unswerving resolution; and that his example and inspiration are to be sought only in times of adversity? On the contrary, I believe that Lincoln's philosophy of life applies to the days of prosperity as well, and that his philosophy of loyalty is as imperatively binding upon us who rejoice in the blessings of peace as upon those who are giving their all in the sacrifices of war. Shall the nations of Europe instinctively turn to him in trouble while we, his own people, forget him and his teachings, because indeed all goes well with us?

Since his death we have been happily free from the disaster of war. We have grown big and rich and prosperous while the whole world has been made tributary to our comfort and well being. The very impoverishment of the warring nations abroad has been the occasion for the amassing of fabulous fortunes, and the

alarming increase of luxury and luxurious living throughout our land. It can only be a matter of conjecture as to how Lincoln might have led his people through a period of prosperity, because he was never put actually to this test. From the poverty of his youth to the tragedy of his death there was for him one long protracted struggle against heavy odds, while the sole gleam of light to guide him was that which shone from his own unconquerable hope and faith. I am convinced, however, that were he to return to this marvelous life of ours today his unerring insight would discover the dangers to which we as a people are exposed by reason of that very prosperity which we are wont to regard as an unquestionable blessing.

We must meet this test in the same spirit that Lincoln met the test of adversity, for whatever it is in a man's nature which makes him self-reliant in trouble should also lead him to be self-

governed in the time of plenty. It is not hazardous therefore to conjecture what Lincoln's counsel would be to this present generation of American people. In his Thanksgiving Proclamation of October 20th, 1864, Lincoln recounts as the supreme blessing of his people that "God has been pleased to animate and inspire our minds and hearts with fortitude, courage and resolution sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity." Those spiritual qualities which Lincoln emphasized as necessary to meet the stress and strain of war, he would doubtless urge upon our consideration today as being the qualities of manly vigor which alone can prepare the spirit of a people to withstand the subtle temptation of an overwhelming prosperity. There are perils of peace as well as those of war, and we find ourselves con-

fronted by the grave danger at the present time that our American people may become "prisoners in their own treasure house."

There is no right thinking man who does not ardently desire the continuance of peace in our land, but on the other hand no people should allow themselves to be placed under the bondage of fear—so that they shrink from proceeding, "with firmness in the right as God gives them to see the right," because of the fear that they may put in jeopardy the peace and well being of the nation's life.

The extreme pacifist of today may profit by the words of Lincoln in his letter to a member of the Society of Friends, of Burlington, N. J., who headed a peace movement at the most critical period of the civil war. This letter was recently published in the London Spectator of March 4th, 1916, and as far as I know this is

the first time that it has appeared in print. In part it is as follows:

“The purposes of the Almighty are perfect and must prevail though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light He gave us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great end He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion which no mortal could make and no mortal could stay. Your people, the Friends, have had and are having a very great trial. On

principle and faith opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war."

It is certain that Lincoln would have chosen peace rather than war if there had been the possibility of such a choice. I do not suppose that there was ever a person to whom the horrors of war have caused such acute vicarious suffering. Nevertheless he refused to entertain the suggestion of any compromise in order to bring about a speedy ending of the war, but persistently and patiently strove for that victory which should vindicate the justice of the cause to which he had pledged his support and that of his people.

The idea which Lincoln placed above peace, above prosperity, above all material wellbeing was the idea of the undivided union. In his opinion no sacrifice was too great in order to

secure the integrity of the nation's life and spirit. Today we are confronted by the same problem, although in a different form. Lincoln fought and overcame the forces which were determined upon a sectional division,—the North and the South. No such danger presents itself now. We fear no conflict between North and South, nor East and West. There is a real danger, however, that in the bewildering complexity of our modern life small groups of self-centered interests may become so sufficient unto themselves that they will lose all concern for the common welfare. With men of many races and many tongues, can we stimulate and maintain the unity of national spirit? Can we transform newly-made citizens, ignorant of our institutions and traditions, into loyal patriots? These are the problems of our day and generation and they have become more acute because of the sharp

contrast which we cannot fail to recognize between the people of the United States and the nations abroad. Each one of these nations has been fused by the fire of war into one people, but with us there is no force operative today to bring and hold us together as a united nation. Our whole tendency is towards the development of an exaggerated individualism which we must endeavor by every means of education and example to overcome. If our youth, whether native born or newly arrived as emigrants at our gates, can be schooled in the first principles of Americanism and can be brought to a realization that the citizen owes an obligation to the state in times of peace as well as in the peril of war, this would constitute the first lesson in patriotism.

To this end the plan of universal military service now so generally under discussion will be of significant aid. It is not merely that

such a measure naturally provides an adequate national defense; more than that, it tends in a larger measure to preserve the spirit of our national unity. It is only by bringing together the heterogeneous elements of our country in some universal democratic training, many of whom are foreign born, some of whom have only half-hearted allegiance to our national ideas, that they can be made to realize the compelling power of a common obligation and a common cause. We need the baptism of Lincoln's spirit which is illustrated in his message upon the Draft Laws wherein he directly addresses those who challenge the right of a government to compel its citizens to give themselves for military service.

“The toil and blood of at least a million of your manly brethren have been given as much for you as for themselves. Shall it all be lost rather

than that you, too, will bear your part? Shall we shrink from the necessary means to maintain our free government, which our grandfathers employed to establish it and our own fathers have already employed once to maintain it? Are we degenerate? Has the manhood of our race run out?"

This is Lincoln's challenge to the men of his own day. These same searching questions we may well put to ourselves. "Are we degenerate? Has the manhood of our race run out?"

Therefore, as we look into the future, veiled and unknown, let us upon this occasion, sacred to the memory of him who lived and died in the faith that the cause of the Union could and must be preserved, and that the common burden should be borne not by a few but by

all, let us dedicate ourselves anew to the task of "maintaining in the world that form and substance of the government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life."

Since the completion of this address, we have come through the sudden turn of events into a position where as a nation it has been necessary to terminate diplomatic relations with the German government. At last we are in the open, and the way before us is clear. As though by a magic impulse, our people North, South, East and West have declared their undivided allegiance to their country's cause. Not only the sons of those who fought in the Revolution and the Civil War, but our foreign born citizens as well have given un-

qualified expression to their spirit of loyalty. Most gratifying has been the assurance from those of German blood that in the day of our need they will not be found wanting. From most unexpected quarters there has been a splendid revelation of spontaneous patriotism. It is evident that the spirit of Lincoln still moves mightily among us; therefore, it is possible to believe that we can prove to the world that we are indeed one people, united by the bonds of a common cause. Let us steadfastly hold our course as the logic of events and the traditions of our fathers may direct us. However arduous the task, however overwhelming the sacrifice, "let us have faith that right makes might and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."





Lincoln, the Man and His Great Achievement

The Address Delivered by

Honorable Thomas Sterling

United States Senator for South Dakota



I MUST first express my sincere appreciation of the high honor and the pleasure, too, I have in being permitted to address you on an occasion so great and notable as this.

The place and the occasion have put me for the moment in reminiscent mood.

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We have all heard men speak of the greatest day of their lives, not because of their own achievements, but because it was a day apart and made great and memorable through its political, its religious or its patriotic associations or because of the ambitions to which it appealed.

That greatest day of my life was the day of my first visit to Springfield, I being at the time a student at the Illinois Wesleyan University at Bloomington; the occasion was the dedication of that splendid monument of granite and bronze out at Oak Ridge to the memory of the Great Emancipator and whom we rightly call the Savior of the Republic.

To me it has seemed the greatest day of my life, because I saw gathered here for the one common purpose the men high in civil and military life, who had shaped the policies, fought the battles and controlled the destinies

of the Republic for many years. For here were Grant, then President, and Sherman and Sheridan and Logan and Vice President Wilson and scores of others of national or state fame. And here, too, was a concourse of people made up from every walk in life, from near and from far, such as I had never seen before, nor hardly since. All here in obedience to the general impulse to do him reverence. For, after all, it was not the display, not the multitude, not the pageantry, but the common theme in every heart and on every tongue with its lessons of glorious service and unfaltering patriotism that made the day so great.

Quoting from the Dedication Poem:

“Not to the Dust but to the Deeds alone
A grateful people raise the historic stone
For where a patriot lived, or hero fell
The daisied turf would mark the spot as well.”

This, in passing. We can tolerate but one theme here tonight. This Honorable Associa-

tion under whose auspices we meet exists to perpetuate a memory, to hold up an example, to teach a lesson of courage and faith and patriotism and devotion to principle which should be an inspiration to every aspiring American youth, and which should help to keep the nation itself in the right path.

That we may rightly estimate the personality and the genius of Lincoln we must think of the time, the events and issues into which that personality was projected.

It was not yet the United States concerning which Professor, our late British Ambassador, Bryce wrote in the *American Commonwealth*. Speaking of our institutions he says:

“They represent an experiment in the rule of the multitude tried on a scale unprecedentedly vast, and the results of which every one is concerned to watch, and yet they are

something more than an experiment, for they are believed to disclose and display the type of institutions towards which, as by a law of fate, the rest of civilized mankind are forced to move, some with swifter, others with slower, but all with unresting feet.”

Eloquent words!—written as they were by that keenest and yet most sympathetic among foreign critics, of our free institutions they fill with pride and hope the heart of every true American. They seem to epitomize the fruits and the proofs of a century of Democracy. They are full of assurance. They all but deny the experiment is a failure. Their import is that the great Republic of the West had become the light of the world.

A superficial view might lead to the conclusion that it had all been easy, the uninter-

rupted progress of a united people. Why, it is only 128 years ago, a span of two lives of sixty-four years each, since Washington's first inauguration and the beginning of the new government under the Constitution. Then we were perhaps four millions settled for the most part along the Atlantic seaboard, now we are 104 millions extending across the continent; then a national wealth of four billions, now estimated to be 200 billions. How could it all have been achieved in a period so brief in the life of nations unless without internal strife and dissension, without the loss of any economic force men were permitted to explore and develop and multiply and pursue, without hindrance for a day, all the arts of peace?

If our political system is the light, surely our material progress is the marvel of the world.

But while the full picture partly revealed by Professor Bryce might back in the days

before the Civil War have been the dream and national ideal of thousands of citizens in every section of the Union, the United States of that day, of the day when Lincoln practiced law here in Springfield, was not the United States thirty years after the war when Mr. Bryce gave his book to the world. The amazing thing is that we have not been free from internal dissension and still have achieved it. The miracle is that in spite of a Union rent in twain, a house divided against itself, and four years of Civil War on the most gigantic scale known to history, we have achieved it and tonight may glory in the thought that in all the elements of national wealth and power, ours is unsurpassed among the nations of the world.

In the observance of this anniversary we are transported back to that earlier day. We are face to face with its burning issues. We see what subjects were not clearly set at rest by

the Constitution, and not being set at rest what dark, insidious forces and prejudices and sectional interests despairing of victory at the ballot box are now threatening by force to destroy the fabric which the fathers had reared with such toil and sacrifice.

Jealousy of the power of the larger states and of the general government had been strongly manifest before the Convention of 1787. On that rock the Convention itself came near disruption and some of its ablest members had almost despaired of the fulfillment of the great object of the Convention. But compromise after compromise at last resulted in a Constitution which would mean a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity.

But that great instrument did not in terms declare the indestructibility of the Union at the

will of a State. It did not abolish human slavery. From the one omission grew the doctrine that the Constitution was a mere compact of States, leaving the Union dissoluble at the will of one of the parties.

The other, slavery, grew to be an institution intrenched as a sacred property right beside which free white labor could not exist. The result was inevitable dependence upon it and a defiant slave oligarchy, embracing half the settled area of a Republic dedicated to the proposition that all men were created free and equal.

I think it not amiss to speak of the first as the deep-seated, ultimate cause of the latter as the compelling occasion which led with fateful certainty to the supreme and final test of war.

We should not forget here a few of the towering ones of those earlier times whose conception of the Union became an article of

political faith for the North and West as the hour of struggle drew near, the faith to which Lincoln held and of which he was destined to become the greatest exponent. We must not forget Alexander Hamilton, who, whether present or absent, was, it has been said, the master spirit of the Convention that framed the Constitution of the United States; whose ideal was a nation created of jarring commonwealths but still a nation "established on the highest level of right." Nor Chief Justice Marshall, who by his decisions was to make it plain that the Constitution "was adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the Union"; nor Webster, whose lofty and impressive utterances appealed to national ideals, aroused the national self-consciousness and gave it a "morning vision of its great tasks and certain destiny." Nor Clay, whose sympathetic insight warned him of the coming

storm, whose love of the Union so deep and sincere made him the author of the compromise which could postpone but not prevent the day of reckoning and trial.

That the nation was at last engulfed in a terrible civil war detracts nothing from the fame of these men nor their great service. The rich legacy of principles and of individual patriotism which they left behind formed a standard as it were around which rallied the loyal and liberty loving sons of the North.

But events thickened. The doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty found expression in the audacious repeal of the Missouri Compromise which had stood for a generation and which had prohibited slavery in all territory West of the Mississippi included in the Louisiana Purchase and North of $36^{\circ} 30'$ North Latitude. The repeal was effected by the Kansas-Nebraska Act which admitted those two states

to the Union, leaving it to the settlers to say somehow, at some time, not defined, whether the States should be slave or free. Then it was "bleeding Kansas," the theatre of war and of the appeal to force to determine whether free soiler or slave owner should rule. The conflict of ideas deepens with the Dred Scot decision, holding that Congress had no constitutional power to forbid a citizen from carrying slave property into any part of the public domain nor power even to authorize a Territorial Legislature to so forbid. The rigorous enforcement of the fugitive slave law, the murderous assault upon Charles Sumner in the Senate Chamber, the raid of John Brown, his capture and execution at Harpers Ferry, were parts and incidents of the great drama.

And meanwhile the clans of Freedom are forming. They seek a common party organ through which they can declare policies, plan

resistance to the aggressions of the slave power of the South and for the common weal gain control of the Government at Washington. Thus the patriotic beginning of the Republican Party. It would need a leader, and a leader was even then in final training, the greatest “natural born” political leader this or any other country has ever produced.

Time will not permit even the briefest sketch of his remarkable earlier history, of his gradual rise from rude pioneer poverty, from the commonest of the common to the leadership of his party in the State. The story has been told in varying forms a thousand times. You know it by heart, and for the reason largely that the life story of no great American so appeals to the heart as does that of Lincoln. It is so vividly and intensely human; human not alone in his broad sympathies, but in the personal friendships and attachments which he formed;

human in his quick understanding of the motives of men and the influences good or bad to which they would yield obedience; human in his never failing sense of humor which stood him in good stead in the hour of calumny, amid the bickerings of cabinet officers or when inertness or failure marked the attitude or course of his Generals in the field—"You look anxious, Mr. President. Is there bad news from the front?" "No," answered the President, "It isn't the war, its that postmastership at Brownsville." Entirely human, he was in his tender regard for childhood and for the aged, in his reverence for woman, and I think of him sometimes as almost more than human in his magnanimity and his "charity for all."

But what was the bent of mind which followed was to equip him for those tests of character, of intellect, of leadership, tests which later he met with such marvelous success?

What were his studies; what his deep meditations? Law, politics, and the great facts of history must have been to him the alluring field of high endeavor. They make powerful appeal to the intellectually and politically ambitious young man of today. It is right they should. For to the high minded and practical lover of his kind, knowledge obtained in such fields stimulates to effort, and equips for public service for which the opportunity will some time come. Public service is not limited to public office. It has been said of Lincoln that though office came to him, he would have served his party just as earnestly if there had been no office to reward him. But aside from either office or party a nature so human and chivalrous as his could not have been content without some large sphere of service to mankind.

An able lawyer, he was not enamored of the technicalities of the law. "One side of his

nature was open to the eternal." For him the law was an instrument for the protection of rights, the redress of wrongs, its end justice, and more and more such is becoming the practice as well as the ideal of this great profession.

His acquaintance with history may be questioned by some. It is not often counted among his attainments. He surely did not vaunt his learning in this or in any field. When reminded by one of the Southern Commissioners to negotiate peace that Charles I entered into an agreement with "parties in arms against the government," Lincoln said, "I do not profess to be posted in history. In all such matters I will turn you over to Seward. All I distinctly remember about the case of Charles I is that he lost his head."

But I must believe he pursued with ardor the historical studies for which he had the means and the time; that he was philosopher

enough to know its lessons, to take heed of its warnings. To him history had its moral teachings, and straightened his conviction that in the struggle between right and wrong, the right would in the end prevail.

Both in his policies and in his utterances he exemplified the uses of history as defined by one of the greatest historians:

“First it is a voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last; not always by the chief offenders, but paid by some one. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may

be long-lived, but doomsday comes at last to them, in French revolutions and other terrible ways.”

The man who declared, “A house divided against itself cannot stand, I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free, I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it will cease to be divided,” saw with clear vision that noble use of history described by Mr. Froude.

The years from fifty-six to sixty were years of ripening discipline, the speech at the Bloomington Convention of May 29, 1856, so powerful and captivating that men could not report it, sealed his right to lead the Republicans of Illinois. The joint debates with Douglas in fifty-eight and the Cooper Union speech in sixty gave final proof of that clear thinking and dauntless courage, of devotion to just prin-

ciples which fitted him above all others as the one to lead and guide the nation through the gloom and peril so near at hand.

“So came the Captain with the mighty heart
And when the step of Earthquake shook
the House

Wrenching the rafters from their ancient hold
He held the ridge pole up and spiked again
The rafters of the Home.”

What was the one charge he laid upon every energy of mind and soul? “The Union must and shall be preserved.” He knew that amid all other issues and distractions he was here on solid ground with the law and the Constitution and the ideals of the Fathers freed from selfish interests to support him.

He wrote to Horace Greeley in 1862: “If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that.”

What a lesson to some would-be reformers of later times who lose sight of the ultimate good, whose causes in their minds overtop all considerations of the practical and expedient, who in their impatience know neither the restraints of the Constitution nor of public opinion!

But with the saving of the Union as a mandate laid upon him by the Constitution would a resort to means not authorized by the Constitution be justifiable? Ah, if there were no nation, there were no Constitution, hence what might *not* be done to save the nation for which the Constitution was made? And so Lincoln reasoned in that remarkable letter to Mr. Hodges in April, 1864, with a logic more than Calhoun's, with a patriotism itself sublime:

“My oath to preserve the Constitution imposed on me the duty of preserving by every indispensable means

that government, that nation, of which the Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life, but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures, otherwise unconstitutional, might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that to the best of my ability I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery, or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution altogether."

And so with him it was "This one thing I do," "Save the Union," and to that great consummation all the energies of his now resourceful being were dedicated and directed.

He was a man of peace, but not of peace at any price, nor of peace without victory unless the negotiations embraced the principles of justice and liberty and ended in their triumph. Nor should America today be an intermediary between nations to advise peace on any other terms. Are we to be blind to sacred international obligations; deaf to the voice that sounds across the centuries the laws of right and wrong while we roll in wealth? Are we to forget our fine old national ideals and traditions, our sympathies for the oppressed and down trodden of every nation and that for nations as well as individuals the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity? Leadership may stimulate the noblest aspirations and sym-

pathies of liberty loving men, or it may for the time repress them. But in the long run as the citizens, so the nation, and

“Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.”

With Lincoln, Right and Union were as one and to this end he could if need be wage stern, relentless war. He felt from the first the great wrong of human slavery but he could bide with patience the time when war made the freedom of slaves a necessity and when the act of liberation would not make the Union more divided. He could listen to counsel, profit by experience, and yet through knowledge of men and force of intellect could harmonize and dominate the counsels of men of opposing minds and temperaments in the cabinet and give directions to commanders in the field as well.

Amidst distractions of every kind, amidst the free expressions of conflicting opinions

concerning policies, domestic and foreign, all incident to our democracy, in the face of a gallant and resolute foe in front with a fire of censure and hostile criticism in the rear and even around him, he kept right on patiently, unfalteringly, magnanimously, to the goal, Union one and inseparable.

It is common to say of Lincoln that he was not an educated man; then neither was Washington an educated man, but without his virtues and wisdom the Revolution would scarce have succeeded. Neither was Marshall an educated man, yet without his masterful interpretation of the Constitution, what confusion, nay, what paralysis of the Nation's powers and activities would not have resulted. Neither was Shakespeare an educated man, but without his inimitable power to portray in our mother tongue every motive, passion, dream or ideal of the human soul, great or ignoble, what en-

richment of thought and of language, what fertile resource of education itself would have been lost to the world? In the sense that these were not educated, so Lincoln was not an educated man, but “what master could have taught him?” He had the genius for his mighty task. It was a genius which appeals to both the intellect and the affections. It embraced the power to say in his first inaugural:

“Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched as surely they will be by the better angels of our nature.”

And, then, in his second inaugural:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Behold in these and in the incomparable Gettysburg speech that “sweet reasonableness,” that persuasiveness of speech, and that form which give them place among the gems of literature and compel the admiration of the scholarship of the world. With how much of this marvelous power of expression he was endowed by nature, and how much came from

practice and the reading of great authors, Shakespeare among them, we may not say, but certain it is that it was a power which played its great part not alone in saving the Union, but in binding up its wounds, leaving at last no North and no South along the old lines and for the old causes. And all the time now as between sections are the mystic chords of memory being touched by the better angels of our nature.

The United States, but lately on the verge of war with one of the belligerents in this European cataclysm, may not be able to continue at peace with all the world. It is impossible to say what a day, nay, what any hour, may bring forth; but whatever betide, this is a crisis which knows no sections. It should, within all our citizenship of whatever origin, know none but Americans imbued with the spirit of national unity, insistent on the pro-

tection of American rights and ready to make sacrifice, all together, to maintain them. If free self-government is the best among political systems; best calculated to secure individual liberty, to encourage the genius and enterprise of its citizens and thus promote the general welfare, no force or influence should be permitted to assail or undermine it here in its great citadel and this not only for America's sake but for every people to whom our institutions may furnish a light to walk by.

Lincoln felt that the loss of the Union cause would imperil the cause of Freedom throughout the world. With sectionalism no more a menace, it is for us and our posterity to decide whether through fear or for love of peace at any price we shall "meanly lose," or whether through adherence to a great national ideal, and the courage which befits American citizens, we "shall nobly save the last best hope of earth."

As we recall the words and deeds of Lincoln, note how he met and mastered successively the problems which confronted him and the means he employed, he seems to have been the very embodiment of practical wisdom and tact. The motives of men, the mainsprings of action, and all political endeavor and aspirations of the common people constituted a rich lore in which no man of his time was more versed than he. In knowing these things he knew all the essentials of successful leadership, and having with such equipment put his great soul into the cause he was invincible. He imparted his spirit to the loyal citizenship of the nation. In the darkest days of the Republic he gave to its friends "a clear faith and a well grounded hope" and the calm courage that made them likewise invincible. With that the cause was won.

The triumph of Arms at Appomattox sealed the work, and left for our heritage, and I believe for all the future, a Union saved and a nation free. Recalling the words of Mr. Bryce, this is why we now, as a nation, “disclose and display that type of institutions towards which the rest of civilized mankind, as by a law of fate, are forced to move, some with swifter, others with slower, but all with unresting feet.”





